How Reliable Are Your Vari-Nozzles?

By MMCM(SS) John Mosholder, Naval Safety Center

The answer might just surprise you. During the past year, I have found an alarming number of fire-hose stations out of commission because their vari-nozzles were stuck in the low- or no-flow positions. Affected were earlier models of the 95- and 125-gpm nozzles made by Elkhart Brass Manufacturing Co. Surface corrosion of internal parts caused the nozzles to become stuck.

You can identify earlier design nozzles by looking into the open valve through the coupling end. If you see a three-legged brass part (known as a stem-base web) the nozzle may be defective**.** The nozzle poppet-and-stem assembly system in the center of the discharge end screws into this part. The entire assembly should move freely, in and out, with approximately one-quarter-inch of travel. The brass stem base can corrode to the nozzle body, which locks the poppet-and-stem assembly in the low- or no-flow position.

Whether or not the assembly moves, you must remove the nozzle from the hose to inspect it for the potentially defective part. Later model vari-nozzles have a rigid, cast-in-place, two-legged stem base and are not susceptible to the corrosion-caused failure.

You can repair defective nozzles by replacing the three-legged, brass stem-base. Order the replacement part and installation instructions from:

Elkhart Brass Manufacturing Co.
P.O. Box 1127
Elkhart, Ind. 46515

When ordering the replacement part, be sure to include your complete mailing address and specify that you're ordering the stem-base web, part No. 63420000. For more ordering help, contact Debbie Welsch at (219) 295-8330, ext. 240. The company's Fax number is (219) 293-9914.

There is a $2.25 charge for each replacement stem base ordered.

Three-legged (potentially defective)

Later version (no action required)